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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000154

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KDEM](#) [AM](#)  
SUBJECT: ARMENIA ELECTION AFTERMATH: TER-PETROSSIAN PASSES  
US A CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Classified By: CDA Joseph Pennington, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) "URGENT MESSAGE": Presidential candidate Levon Ter-Petrosian's (LTP) adviser, Levon Zurabian, requested an urgent meeting with PolChief February 21. Suggesting the possibility of electronic eavesdropping, Zurabian passed PolChief a note (text at para 5), which he said was directly from LTP -- specifically, LTP had dictated the message to Zurabian in Armenian, who translated and transcribed the note into English. Zurabian is both a close LTP adviser, and LTP's designated go-between with the U.S. Embassy.

¶2. (C) POSSIBLE CLASH/HOPE FOR A SECOND ROUND: Aside from handing over the note, Zurabian made two points orally. First, that the campaign had information that authorities would disrupt the LTP rally planned for 15:00 local that same day. Second, he alleged that the authorities had deliberately left open the possibility of modifying the published results, such that PM Sargsian's results would fall under the 50 percent threshold, and thus send the election to a second round. He said they had done this by leaving some precinct results unverified.  
(COMMENT: He was not entirely specific on this point, and we have no independent evidence that this may be the case. However, we understand that something much like this happened during one of President Kocharian's two elections, in which authorities backed away from an early announcement of an absolute majority, to announced revised figures below 50 percent, in the face of popular protests. END COMMENT).

¶3. (C) POSSIBLE MARCH ON FRENCH EMBASSY: We asked Zurabian some more general questions. He asserted that some 400 LTP candidate proxies or commission members had been assaulted and ejected from polling places on election day. He further asserted the campaign's belief that LTP rightfully won the election -- not necessarily a majority, but a plurality -- based on reports from candidate representatives in the polling places early on election night. We asked about planned marches -- specifically to foreign embassies, based on a rumor we had heard. Zurabian said there was no firm plan, but there had been some talk of marching to the French Embassy, in protest over French President Sarkozy's prompt congratulations message to PM Sargsian. Nothing had been said about marching in front of the U.S. Embassy or any others.

¶4. (C) RESTRAINT URGED: PolChief urged that all actions be peaceful, mentioning that both the LTP campaign and authorities were each to be commended for preserving the peace during yesterday's rallies and march. Zurabian reaffirmed that this was the LTP campaign's plan, but expressed concern that authorities would intervene forcefully.

15. (C) FULL TEXT OF LTP NOTE:

The people are angry. They push us to resort to decisive actions. We want to keep the movement within the legal framework and we are intent to continue that way. However, doing so seems to be difficult, at some point the situation may go out of control.

The only way out is the second round in the presidential elections. This will allow keeping the people,s movement within constitutional confines.

Our request is: to put pressure on the authorities to go this way. Also, to put pressure on them not to disrupt our peaceful manifestations, demonstrations and marches. They will not be able to reject your pressure.  
END TEXT

16. (C) COMMENT: We have no wish to be drawn into the domestic political situation, but it is evident that LTP hopes for exactly that. Whatever public statement we make is likely to be seized upon by one side or the other, either to validate the outcome or to indict it. We see no alternative, however, but to continue to evaluate this election as objectively as we can, and letting that analysis guide our public statements.  
PENNINGTON